



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

February 20, 2004

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and for giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing, while keeping true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment, or you can just walk in. See page 4 for the schedule.

Governor's Budget Proposal

On February 12, Governor Granholm introduced her budget proposal for the 2004-05 fiscal year, which will begin on October 1. The Governor's budget proposal takes in consideration the reality of the economy in the state of Michigan: it is still lagging. It has been projected that the state will be confronted with another general fund revenue shortfall of \$1.3 billion in 2005.

The Governor's budget proposal is exactly that: a proposal. Everything that has been offered is not set in stone and much negotiation is on the horizon in order for a budget to be passed for the 2004-05 fiscal year. Proposals will be modified, even dropped, and many more proposals will be offered. The legislature must pass the budget in order for the budget to go into effect.

In the proposal, the Governor calls for about \$494 million in spending cuts, \$391 million in revenue enhancements and several other measures to present a balanced budget. The Governor proposed a 75-cent per pack increase in the cigarette tax, a decoupling of the state estate tax from the federal estate tax and an increase in the liquor mark-up from 65 percent to 74 percent.

The Governor also proposed a change in the method of collecting county property taxes for revenue sharing. The Governor proposed an earlier collection date for county property taxes to July of each year rather than the December collection date. This proposal would take effect this year, under current arrangements. I believe that this proposal should take effect in 2005, rather than a few months from now, in order to give people a chance to adjust to the changed collection date.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will be in the thick of the budget negotiations. Rest assured that I will work hard to make sure to judge each budget proposal based on its merits and will work hard to make sure that the budget is fiscally responsible and deals with the structural problems that the state budget faces.

**Please look for future updates on the budget in future additions of the electronic newsletter.*

Annual Sewage Report

Imagine that it is a 95° day outside. The sun is glaring down, the rays of sunshine so penetratingly hot that it makes you sweat just thinking about it. It's Sunday and it is your first day off in three weeks. You put your 40 plus hours in. It's now time to relax. So you and your family decide to take a trip over to Metro Beach to take a swim, only to find out that Metro Beach is closed yet again.

Typical. Once again, you say? What is it this time?

There are many reasons why many of our beautiful beaches are closed. The main culprit is what is being put into our lakes, rivers and streams. Specifically, the amount of sewage that our local public entities discharge into our waters is an issue of concern.

Last year, I introduced SB 29, which would require local public entities that discharge sewage into our rivers and lakes to produce an annual report and summary of their discharges.

Current law stipulates that within 24 hours of a municipality or county discharging untreated or partially treated sewage into our waters, it must notify the Department of Environmental Quality and other local entities such as surrounding municipalities, local health departments, and local newspapers. It must also report the volume and quality of the discharged sewage at the end of each discharge.

SB 29 would require the entities that dump the sewage to accumulate all of their reports for the entire year and distribute the totals to the aforementioned entities. This would be in addition to current law which requires a report on each instance within 24 hours.

The Macomb County Health Department has been at the forefront regarding the collection of data on the discharging of sewage. Thomas Kalkofen and Water Quality Board Chairman Doug Martz have been crucial in fighting for the cleanup of our rivers, streams and lakes.

However, there are 82 other counties in the state each with varying amounts of reporting and accounting practices.

Currently, these reports are either incomplete or are difficult for the media to use. An annual sewage discharge report would bring public attention to how much sewage is being discharged by local entities. It would help create public accountability and support for solutions to reduce discharges and clean up our waters.

SB 29 is currently in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs where it has been awaiting a hearing. If you would like to know how to help in moving this bill out of committee, please contact our office.

Blue Ribbon Schools

I would like to extend a congratulations and a job well done to the students, parents, faculty and administrators of Henry Ford II High School in Sterling Heights and Chippewa Valley High School in Clinton Township. Both schools received the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award earlier this week.

Each of the schools met very demanding criteria while delivering a quality education to their students and the community should be proud of their accomplishments.

Both schools were among 13 schools in the state that received the honor this year. The Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Program was established in 1982 and recognizes schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence and significant academic improvement over five years.

High schools and middle schools were considered for the Blue Ribbon Award this year. After the schools apply for consideration, a series of peer review committees made a preliminary selection of the schools that they believe warrant a site verification visit. The review committee and the site visit teams are comprised of teachers and administrators from previous Blue Ribbon award-winning schools. Reports from the site visit are then compiled and considered, along with research and data provided by each of the schools.

Elementary schools will be able to apply for consideration for the Blue Ribbon Award next year.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district. My future guests include U.S. Representative Candice Miller (R-Harrison Township) and former Kansas City Royals' first base coach Tom Gamboa, who was attacked by two fans last year in a major league baseball game in Chicago.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Various times/Check local TV listings
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Every other Tuesday at 6:05 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have coffee hours in Roseville. I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot.

Sterling Heights/Utica

**Mar. 1
7-9 P.M.**

Location: Sterling Heights Library
(Utica and Dodge Park roads)

Clinton Township

**Feb. 23, Mar. 29
7-9 P.M.**

Location: Clinton Township Library
(35891 Gratiot and 15 mile)

Contact My Office

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